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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of the single 2000 issue of a journal for Florida early childhood education practitioners, providing information on current issues in early childhood education, educational practices, and activities of the Early Childhood Association of Florida (ECA of FL). Regular features in each issue include "Did You Know?" a column to increase awareness of health and safety issues in early childhood programs; reviews of children's literature; a calendar of events; reports from ECA of FL officers; and information on ECA of FL activities. This issue features articles on creating mentoring relationships among teachers, forms of age-related stereotypes in children's literature, the Florida administrator credential, and teaching children how to perceive and respond to others' misbehavior. (KB)

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Fall/Winter 2000
Volume XXV, No. 1

CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

The Journal of the Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

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Inside this issue:

- *Hearing a Child's Call for Help: Creating Safe Classrooms*
- *Forms of Age-Related Stereotypes in Children's Literature*
- *Creating Mentoring Relationships Among Teachers*

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The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

The mission of the Early Childhood Association of Florida is to promote the quality of life, learning, and care of young children through leadership, advocacy, and professional development of its members in order to enhance their work on behalf of young children and families.

The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. (ECA of Florida) represents nearly 4,000 professionals, parents, and other community members who are concerned, interested, and actively involved in enhancing the quality of life for young children. The Early Childhood Association of Florida, Inc. is an affiliate of The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Throughout this publication, references to the Early Childhood Association of Florida will not include the "Inc." designation, but it is expressly understood that the Early Childhood Association of Florida is incorporated properly with the State of Florida.

About *CHILDREN OUR CONCERN*

Children Our Concern is in its 25th year as the publication of the Early Childhood Association of Florida. Membership in the Association includes two annual issues of *Children Our Concern*. The Early Childhood Association of Florida does not accept responsibility for statements of fact or opinion which appear in *Children Our Concern*. Acceptance of advertising does not represent the Early Childhood Association of Florida's endorsement of any product or service, nor is the Early Childhood Association of Florida responsible for representation made by advertisers.

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Volume XXV, No. 1

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President's Letter

On the Rocky Road to Quality

Eight years ago Florida legislators passed historical child care legislation concerning the training of child care workers. Now in the year 2000 further training requirements have been enacted focusing on directors of child care facilities and family child care home providers. Clearly our legislators are attempting to improve the quality of care for the young children of Florida. As an Association whose known mission statement embodies the spirit of the best care for the most children, we have been thrust into the forefront of a movement which advocates for quality child care. This is a position which we have sought in the past, have prepared ourselves for through the years, and must now accept as our professional duty. But the path toward universal acceptance of the meaning of quality is strewn with barriers and pitfalls due to the diversity of the members of our Association.

Forty-five years ago our Association was created by an assembly of 300 like-minded people in Gainesville. This year at our annual conference approximately 2300 people gathered in Orlando for a re-enactment of that first assembly. The diversity of this year's group is to be celebrated. We represent all types of child care facilities, family home child care, service and state agencies, and every type of education and training imaginable. How much do we differ from the original 300 can only be guessed. But it is in the diversity that we now have that our strength and wisdom will come. Needless to say, we have opinions on every subject, for and against every legislation, and on behalf of a "United Nations" of children and families. However, we have no choice but to continue to travel down the path that looms ahead where ratios, salaries, readiness, and vouchers are but a few of the marshes we will have to wade through together as an Association in order to effect future legislation for the well-being of our children. How do we avoid the barriers and pitfalls created by hubris and self-absorption? Will we be able to listen to all sides of the argument? In other words, will we use our diversity of membership to formulate wise, child caring platforms reached by consensus rather than self-defeating excoriation?

As we travel down that road to which I keep alluding we may find, like Dorothy, that at the end there is not really such a scary witch – we may find that quality is something we knew and practiced all along. So, let us join together in a great debate to clarify what we mean by quality child care in the new millennium (which as we all know begins January 1, 2001).

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about my goals as your new president. In my present (paying) position as the Child Care Apprenticeship Coordinator at the Sarasota County Technical Institute, the opportunity to visit child care centers and mentor child care teaching staff has opened my eyes to the varying situations which exist in the child care world. As a former preschool teacher, I have experienced the frustration of "too many hands to wash, not enough time to give all the hugs." But as a former director, I also know the worries connected with staffing, budgeting, and licensing. As your president, my goal is to lead the Early Childhood Association of Florida along the path of advocating for quality child care, keeping my eyes on the middle of the road, slowing down when necessary to reconsider where we are going, and delaying the journey so others can find a comfortable seat on board. I hope you will come along for the duration of the trip.

Dr. Janice Sean is the Early Childhood Education Coordinator for Sarasota County Technical Institute, Sarasota, FL.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ***Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) Conference***
  Little Rock, AR - March 29-31, 2001. Phone 501-663-0353
- ***ECA of FL Conference 2001***
  Orlando, FL - Sept. 20-22, 2001. Phone 941-951-0606
- ***Children's Week***
  Tallahassee, FL - March 18-22, 2001

Executive Director's Report

As I sat in the local School Readiness Coalition meeting in my county, a sudden realization came over me and I was shocked. Not very many early care and education providers in our area attend the meetings, are knowledgeable about groundbreaking decisions being made, or give the impression that they care about what is happening. Where are the majority of child care providers and parents of preschool children who will be affected by the School Readiness Legislation? The business community stepped forward to fill the slots on the coalition. They have educated themselves and totally understand that the field is critical for the future of our society. Yes, there is a Head Start director, a subsidized child care administrator, a faith based and private child care representative, a family child care home representative (not in every county, but included in our coalition), and a public school administrator. They are mandated to serve by law. Where are the hundreds of members of ECA of FL in every county? Yes, we are fortunate that many of our leaders have been appointed to the local coalitions all over the state. But, where are the other members? Are you attending the meetings? Some are held during the weekday while you are working. You can still, however, be involved. Have you asked for town hall meetings or occasional night meetings that you can attend? Are you volunteering to serve on committees that will drive the local plan?

It is our obligation to not only attend these meetings, but to speak up and have our voices heard. How often do we complain that the legislation imposed this or that on early care and education? Now, the power has been transferred from Tallahassee to your own backyard. You must represent not only yourself, but also every child in your care.

As I travel about the state, I hear over and over that ECA of FL represents quality. We have stood up as an organization and said that children must have wonderful environments to reach their full potential. We have repeated over and over that monies expended to subsidize child care must pay the full cost of care. We have pushed for equitable pay for child care providers. We have spoken out for lower ratios and group sizes. We support accreditation. Every one of these issues will be addressed and decided by your local coalition. You have a knowledgeable voice and are obligated to lend your expertise to these folks.

What difference does it make, you ask, if I don't take subsidized children into my program or teach Head Start or Pre-Kindergarten? Why should you become active? Local coalitions are not just responsible for the programs that give federal and state dollars to centers and family child care homes, they are responsible for **all children** in the area. Their decisions will affect every child care center, every child care provider, and every parent and child. Right now the coalitions have been pressured to deal with gathering statistics on the entire early care community and to look for duplication and gaps in services. They have been scrambling to make decisions on how to spend the millions of dollars that are funneled into each local community. Now that the local plans are finished, they will be diligent about making sure the money is spent well and that they are getting value for their dollars. Accountability will be a major concern.

Listening to the discussions after the vote had been made to submit the final plan, I heard proposals to raise the base pay and benefits of early care providers. The members of the coalition lamented that the number of children per worker put unfair pressure on many people in the field, leading to high turnover. You better believe that these committed people will find a way to make changes happen. Their decisions will affect every aspect of early care and education.

Please get involved in your local coalition. Please be ECA of FL's voice in your area. As a knowledgeable professional, please lend your experience and expertise. Every child in Florida will benefit from your effort.

Suzanne Gellens is a Past President of ECA of FL and SECA, and the 1993 recipient of the FACUS Award.

ECA of FL is on the World Wide Web.
http://ECAofFL.org

SECA Representative's Report

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) celebrated its 51st year in Birmingham, Alabama. The theme was "In Concert for Children."

The Board of Directors worked hard on very important issues. The biggest issue was how SECA and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) would work together to benefit all children, but especially the children in the South. SECA will develop a grant to help state affiliates get started and a Disaster Relief Fund to help child care centers re-establish themselves after a storm. SECA has also revised three position statements that can be found on its website, www.southernearlychildhood.org. They are: "Quality Child Care;" "Supporting Learning with Technology in the Early Childhood Classroom;" and "Assessing Development and Learning in Young Children."

ECA of FL was well represented at the Leadership Workshop and the Public Policy Institute. Wearing our state T-shirts were: President Amy Cordray; Southwest Regional Representative Suzi Jamrog; Corresponding Secretary Nell Myrick; Executive Director Suzanne Gellens; SECA Member-at-Large Lourdes Milan; and your SECA Representative Beverly Oglesby. "Leaders: Their Qualities and How to Develop Them" was conducted by Wheelock College. Some of the qualities were: visionary, risk-taker, confidence builder, listener, organizer, creator, encourager, communicator, and networker. We all decided that mentoring was the way to develop future leaders. There was a fishbowl discussion at the Public Policy Institute that discussed School Readiness and Director Credentialing and how this varied from state to state. Many attendees truly enjoyed the first Director's Seminar. SECA will be continuing it as a part of future conferences.

The presentation of the state flags was a spectacular way to begin the conference! Our own President, Amy Cordray, looked most professional with her beautiful and bright smile as she carried the Florida flag. Congratulations to our Vice President of Professional Development, Janet Davies, who was presented the Helen Harley Award for a first time conference attendee. The next time Florida will get this award will be in the year 2007.

The opening keynote speaker was Florida's own "Mr. Al" Rasso, who got the audience rocking and rolling. He told us that music helps children become active and passive participants and gives them multi-sensory experiences. He stated that it is important to remember that we fit the curriculum to the children, not the children to the curriculum.

Friday's keynote speakers were Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey discussing "Early Childhood in the South: 1950-2000, and Beyond." They talked about things that have changed in the lives of children, such as family structure, family mobility, parental age and education, neighborhoods, and ethnic and cultural diversity. Increased public awareness of early childhood and closer relationships with policy makers are positive changes. Children should be encouraged to explore and seek new information. Mentoring of basic skills and celebrating their accomplishments are important. Children need practice to expand and strengthen new skills and protection from harsh, inappropriate treatment by others. The environment should include rich, responsive, fun, language exchanges. Guidance and limits to promote caring, cooperation, and understanding are necessary.

Saturday's keynote speaker was Hedda Sharapan, staff on Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. Her topic was "Three Part Harmony: Children, Parents, and Staff." Hedda stated that to be "In Concert for Children," we need to listen to them and make them feel important. We need to be in harmony with parents. We are the stepping stones to the world for parents and their children.

Child care staff need to learn to laugh and work together for the benefit of children and their families. We need to get to know and care about co-workers. What we give is valuable, especially to that little life we have touched.

You can make the connection by boat, bus, train, or plane to the 52nd SECA conference in Little Rock, Arkansas on March 29-31, 2001.

Beverly Oglesby, Past President of ECA of FL, teaches Kindergarten at S. Bryan Jennings Elementary School in Orange Park, FL.

ECA of FL Political Consultant's Report

By most accounts, the 2000 Legislative Session was one of the most frustrating in Florida's history. It was defined by "in-your-face" special interest control, blatant circumvention of the democratic process, unrelenting power plays - all of which generated scathing statewide editorials branding the session "one big job fair" for retiring legislators and a "fire sale." With nearly half of the members being "termed out," accountability was at an all time low.

In a bold move, Minority Leader Representative Les Miller brought the legislature to task when he proclaimed on statewide public radio, "This is the best legislature money can buy." Another member said that every vote cast against responsible public policy was "bought and paid for." This was no more evident than on the subject of gun safety. ECA took a strong public stand against the power plays that kept the gun safety bills from being heard.

The more big money controls what goes on in Tallahassee, the greater the need for public advocacy. Next year will probably be worse, with so many new members. The first important step is to get involved in the upcoming elections. Grassroots organizing is our source of power. Let's put children's issues first in this election. While ECA does not endorse candidates, as individuals you can work to elect people who will be accountable to children. Please make sure that the new people coming to Tallahassee have the knowledge and commitment to stand up for kids and their teachers and caregivers. ***Make it your business to make children the business of every candidate out there!***

♦ **LEGISLATION.** Because it takes months for the legislative committees to review and analyze all the legislation that passed, the reports were not ready at press time. However, by the time you read this, more comprehensive information should be available at On Line Sunshine at www.leg.state.fl.us. Here are partial lists of issues in which ECA took an active role:

♦ **FLORIDA KIDCARE PROGRAM.** ECA was heavily involved in efforts to replace the local match in order to cover all kids. **Florida's children will lose more than $18 million health care dollars this year. An additional $100 million will be lost to the federal government next year unless the Cabinet adopts a budget amendment before next session.** By participating in a major outreach and enrollment effort to establish a waiting list of children not being served, we can help to demonstrate the need for a budget amendment. The Healthy Kid Board still has the authority to allow counties to opt out of the match requirement.

Instead of providing $12-$14 million to replace the local match, the legislature put proviso language in the budget that ***partially*** addresses the issue. It does buy some time, and in the long term may help to eliminate the match and other barriers to enrollment and access to federal dollars. However, some counties that had trouble maintaining the local match and received additional funds from the Healthy Kid Board may find themselves in big trouble because of the way the funding requirements are set up.

♦ **CHILD CARE AND EARLY INTERVENTION.** The bill provides: 1) improved support to children in subsidized child care and working parents by extending eligibility to 200% of poverty (up from 185%) for families already in the program and provides access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for child care; 2) a process for establishing new rules to make it safer for children who are transported by child care centers; 3) children with developmental delays will be referred to existing programs to facilitate Level III assessments and services; 4) a list of summer camps that comply with approved health and safety standards; and 5) establishment in statute of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship.

♦ **SCHOOL READINESS.** $71 million for subsidized child care and $2 million for local coalitions, with 5% flexibility for fully approved coalitions. ECA members can work with coalitions to spend the flexible

Linda Vaughn, B.A., legislative lobbyist, has influenced policy and appropriations in Florida since 1974; Tallahassee, Florida.

funds on quality enhancement. The bill also: 1) granted sovereign immunity for coalitions; 2) eliminated the requirement for Request for Proposals (RFPs) in selecting central agencies; 3) reassigned certain funding and staff to the Partnership; and 4) withdrew funding for the State Coordinating Council for School Readiness.

♦ **RESIDENTIAL SWIMMING POOL SAFETY ACT.** Although the Speaker held this bill hostage all session, Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (supported by many citizen calls to the Speaker) managed to pass House Bill 25. The Act provides that all new residential swimming pools (with some exemptions) must have at least one of the following: a pool barrier, an exit alarm, an approved safety cover, or self-closing and self-latching doors with pool access. The Department of Health will produce a prevention education pamphlet.

♦ **NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING.** $2.86 million was allocated for hearing tests for all newborns. The screening will be covered by Medicaid and all health insurers.

♦ **THE STUDY COMMISSION ON CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS** must report to the legislature by January 1, 2001 ways in which the state can better identify and serve children with, or at high risk for, mental disorders, developmental delays, and disabilities. The Commission will identify community risk factors like violence, that expose infants and young children to developmental and clinical problems and limit the effectiveness of parents.

♦ **TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED TRUST FUND.** Provides transportation for Florida's seniors, disabled, low income, and children at risk. This would save millions of tax dollars in health care, prevention of nursing home care, unemployment, and provide improved quality of life. Yet, thanks to pure politics regarding the makeup of the commission, not one penny was allocated.

ECA of FL Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER 2000
- 28-30 ECA of FL Conference, Radisson Universal, Orlando.
- 28 Pre-Conference Seminars.
- 28 ECA of FL Executive & Advisory Board Meetings (all regions).
- 29 Public Policy Luncheon.
- 30 ECA of FL Luncheon/Annual Meeting. Installation of Officers and election of Nominating Committee.

OCTOBER 2000
- 15 Deadline for submission of articles for COC to Executive Director.

NOVEMBER 2000
- 1 ECA of FL Officers assume duties; review Strategic Plan.
- 8-11 NAEYC Annual Conference, Atlanta.

DECEMBER 2000
- 1 Deadline for MAP Grant applications.
- 15 Deadline for nomination of ECA of FL officers to Nominating Committee Chair.

JANUARY 2001
- 1 ECA of FL, SECA, and NAEYC fiscal year begins.
- 26-27 ECA of FL Executive Board Meeting
  Membership Drive Reception for SE Region affiliates

MARCH 2001
- 1 Deadline for submission of articles for FACTS to Executive Director. Include Barbara Finck Award application in *FACTS*.
- 16-17 ECA of FL Executive Board Meeting, Tallahassee.
  North Region Advisory Board Meeting.
- 18-22 Children's Week, Tallahassee.
- 29-31 SECA Conference, Little Rock, AR.

APRIL 2001
- 1-7 Week of the Young Child.
- 15 COC deadline.

MAY 2001
- 1 Deadline for Barbara Finck Award and MAP Grant applications.
- 1 Report on Committee Chairs due from Commission on Committees.

JUNE 2001
- 1 Barbara Finck Award recommendation due to Executive Board from Awards Committee.
- 1 Nominating Committee meets and gives report to Executive Board.
- 7-9 Executive Board & Central Region Advisory Meeting, Orlando. Conference site visit.

JULY 2001
- 15 ECA of FL Conference Scholarship Application due.
- 31 Deadline for membership renewals to be sent to Executive office.

AUGUST 2001
- 1 Local affiliates' Financial Reports due to Financial Officer.

SEPTEMBER 2001
- 20-22 ECA of FL Annual Conference, Orlando.

NO DEADLINE DATES FOR: MAP Start-up Grants, Educational Grants (due 60 days prior to recipient's tuition date.) These grants are on-going.

Special Note to All Members:

As you know, we now have a lobbyist in Tallahassee. She is doing a great job representing us and helping get the things done that are in the interests of children and the early care and education community. To have this extra person available for ECA of FL, we are asking our members to donate to the Public Policy Advocacy Fund. Make a gift in honor of or memory of a friend, a relative, or a special teacher. Mail your tax deductible donation to the ECA of FL office.

Reaching Out: Creating Mentoring Relationships Among Teachers

by Dr. Shelly J. Hudson

Mentoring provides positive benefits for both mentor and novice teachers.

A new teacher can feel very isolated. Teachers working next door and administrators down the hall are usually too busy to assist a novice in the day-to-day operations of teaching children. Creating mentoring relationships among teachers is an ideal solution to this common problem.

It has not been that long ago that we, too, were first-year teachers. We may remember attaching ourselves to the teacher next door. This "angel in disguise" had many years of experience, yet seemed to sense that a new teacher needed time and space to work through things in her own way. Although she never coerced us to march in step to her practices, she supported our individual attempts by giving advice when asked. We gained confidence in our teaching abilities with the help of this positive role model.

Teachers helping teachers through mentoring relationships is not a new concept (Love & Rowland, 1999). Teacher-to-teacher mentoring parallels the same type of social interactions as holistic theorists suggest for young children working together as collaborative learners in a classroom (Hudson, 1999; Holdaway, 1976). Ultimately, mentoring not only supports new teachers, but additionally promotes their role in providing a quality education for young children.

Connecting as teachers, mentors, and learners

This article relates a story of two teachers and their mentoring relationship. Abby (fictitious names are used), a second grade teacher with 17 years of teaching experience, was asked by her principal to "help out" a newly hired teacher. In August 1999, Abby initiated a mentoring relationship with her co-worker, Beth, at Lane Elementary School in South Alabama. To be able to share this story, data was collected which includes informal interviews and reflective journal entries. Additionally, E-mail correspondence was used to exchange information concerning Abby and Beth's progress.

This article documents six months of the mentoring relationship—from August 1999 through January 2000. According to Graves (1998), "The medium of narrative allows us to understand the complexities of our lives by selecting essential elements that explain ourselves to ourselves" (p.3). Therefore, a narrative style of writing is used to describe Abby and Beth's roles as mentors, teachers, and learners. In this article we illustrate how Abby and Beth: 1) defined their roles; 2) addressed conflicts and demands concerning the school schedule; and 3) developed trust and admiration through their mentoring relationship. Finally, specific implications for early childhood teachers and caregivers considering mentoring relationships are offered.

Benefits of mentoring: a win-win situation

> *"I just want my students to be happy, confident problem solvers. In the same way, I'm teaching an adult a set of skills and behaviors that will help her be successful, too."*
>
> –Abby's reflective journal, August 10, 1999.

Reviews of the literature concerning mentoring indicate that mentoring provides positive benefits for both mentor and novice teachers (Duquette, 1994; Dana, 1991). Traditionally, educational mentoring involves relationships between supervisors and interns (McNamara,

Shelly J. Hudson, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama. Nancy Dicks and April Lane are second grade teachers at Daniel Pratt Elementary School, Prattville, Alabama.

1995; Hudson, 2000). The structure of mentoring is challenging in this type of collaboration due to the added responsibility of assigning grades. In comparison, the ultimate goal for mentor teachers is peer support. Mentors see themselves as models, resources, supportive evaluators, facilitators of practice, and informers about school culture (Duquette, 1994), while others equate a mentor's role to that of "mothering but not hovering" (Ganser, 1998, p. 115). Bonds of trust and caring provide the foundation for the mentoring relationship.

Bonds of trust and caring provide the foundation for the mentoring relationship.

Defining roles

Abby, 39 years old, holds a bachelor's and master's degree in elementary education. Her class enrollment averaged 18 during the 1999-2000 school year. She was interested in helping a new teacher, just like she had been helped at the beginning of her teaching career.

> *"I think teachers should explore opportunities to give back, to give what another teacher gave them when they were learning to teach"*
>
> – Abby, informal interview, October, 1999

Beth had one year's teaching experience and was 23 years old. Hired at Lane Elementary in August, 1999 as a second grade teacher, she holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Her class enrollment averaged 18 students. As a mentor, Abby helped Beth with daily, weekly, and monthly planning. She shared curriculum materials with Beth. They worked together to plan parent conference meetings. Beth observed Abby teaching reading lessons to gain confidence in her own teaching.

Abby served as a listener when Beth questioned how specific tasks could be accomplished. Abby understood that, "Sometimes a new teacher just needs a 'safe' person to listen, knowing that the information will not leak." Abby also supported Beth's attempts with balancing time. Beth, dealing with collecting juice and milk money, planning for tornado drills, scheduling her bus duty, and giving unit tests reflected, "Time! There's just never enough time!" When their principal conducted the first formal observation in Beth's classroom, Abby was just as thrilled as Beth with the principal's positive comments of Beth's teaching. Abby's reflections demonstrated the research's description of a "motherly" mentoring role.

> *"Beth did very well on her evaluation. She made a few 3's and lots of 4's. Wow! They don't give many 4's. I'm very proud of her!"*
>
> – Abby's reflective journal, October 8, 1999

Addressing conflicts and demands

While Abby and Beth expressed interest in a mentoring relationship, conflicts related to the school schedule arose. As Abby suggested, "Having P.E. at the same time is great for meeting purposes. However, it doesn't help us if Beth wants to observe me teaching." In an effort to work through this conflict, Abby used a free period she had while her students attended music class to teach a reading lesson in Beth's classroom with Beth's students.

Including Abby's mentoring help during the teaching day also provided complications. However, this circumstance allowed other faculty members to become supportive members of the mentoring team.

> *"One morning Beth came to my class during reading time. She had reached her limit with a child who was throwing pencils and refusing to work. She wanted to know if she should send him to the office. I was caught off guard because I was in the middle of a lesson and because I don't send many students to the office. I knew that my next door teacher had taken a child for a similar reason to the office the day before. I suggested that she talk to that teacher to see how things were handled. As the teacher suggested, Beth called the child's parent which was the best thing to do. The child had not taken his medicine that morning. (I didn't know beforehand that she was talking about a child on regularly scheduled medication.) I am also glad Beth is asking other teachers for help. There are so many teachers willing to share their experiences."*
>
> – Abby's reflective journal, November 6, 1999

Trust and admiration

Research describes successful mentoring relationships as those able to establish respect and trust between the participants (Abell, Dillion,

Hopkins, McInterney, & O'Brien, 1995). These characteristics were developed and built upon within Abby and Beth's relationship. Beth appreciated and respected Abby's help and suggestions. "Abby's shared all her files. I can use the information to help plan my teaching. She's there to support me, not judge me. She's my coworker and in many ways a mother-figure for me, too! I appreciate knowing someone is looking out for me."

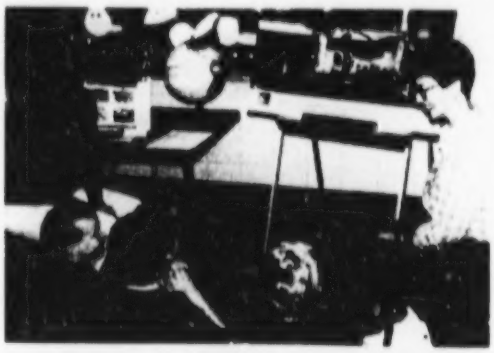
Summary of the benefits of mentoring

In sum, mentoring is a valuable tool for helping beginning teachers. A mentor can serve as a safe sounding board, a person with whom the novice can be totally honest, without fear of retribution. An experienced classroom teacher can model lessons for the novice, offer support, or suggest others who may be more experienced with certain issues. The mentoring relationship must be established and be built upon trust and admiration. Finally, the most successful mentoring relationships involve exchanging roles. The novice shares her new ideas with the experienced teacher.

> *"How do I know I've done a good job as a mentor? I think when the beginning teacher displays increasing self-confidence. She has that 'I'm getting the hang of it' look in her eyes. And the best part? That's when the teacher feels comfortable. She begins to share her ideas with me."*
>
> – Abby's E-mail, October 31, 1999

Mentoring in all early childhood settings

Opportunities for mentoring in all educational settings are imperative.



In child care settings mentoring relationships may be challenging. Teachers in these settings receive few monetary incentives and have a history of high turnover rates. However, giving more experienced teachers the responsibility of mentoring will raise the self-esteem of the mentor by acknowledging that she has valuable skills she can pass on. Participation in a mentoring relationship will also boost the confidence and skill level of the novice, increasing the chances of both the mentor and novice teacher's longevity with the child care center. Additionally, many child care mentoring programs encourage professional development. For example, participants may achieve accreditation credit for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (Bellm, Whitebook, & Hnatiuk, 1997).

The idea of teachers helping teachers will lay the foundation for successfully

Child Care Associations Which Promote Mentoring

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); 1509 16thAve. NW., Washington, DC 20036-1426; (800) 424-2460
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) 206 Sixth Avenue, Midland Bldg, Ste. 900, Des Moines, IA 50309; (515) 282-8192
- National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force (NCECW); 733 15th Street NW, Suite 1037, Washington, DC 20005-2112; (202) 737-7700; E-mail mentor@ncec.prg
- The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education; Wheelock College, 200 The Riverway, Boston MA 02215; (617) 734-5200

– Source: Bellm, D., Whitebook, M., & Hnatiuk, P. (1997).

- Early Childhood Association of Florida (ECA of FL); 3049 Browning Street, Sarasota, FL; (941) 951-0606; E-mail ecaoffl@earthlink.net.
- Florida Association of Child Care Apprenticeship Programs; Joy Manning; 5330 Berryhill Rd., Milton, FL 32570; (850) 626-0141.

LIST OF MENTORING STRATEGIES

Mentors can provide novice teachers with:

1) **access to files including curriculum planning, art ideas, etc.;**
2) **first-day-of-school organization;**
3) **conducting parent workshops and involvement strategies;**
4) **help with responsibilities such as grading policies, writing report cards, and school rules and culture;**
5) **modeling classroom teaching lessons;**
6) **a list of contact people such as guidance counselor, school nurse, secretary, lunchroom workers, community helpers; and**
7) **support by "looking out" for the novice teacher.**

passing on knowledge which only experience can offer. We must remember the enthusiasm we see coming from the first year teacher next door or down the hall from our own classroom. We must reach out and help, just as someone reached out to us.

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Gold Seal Quality Care Program

Florida Statute 402.281

The Gold Seal Quality Care Program has a three-tiered reimbursement rate for subsidized child care providers with the highest reimbursement rates given to accredited child care centers or family child care homes. Gold Seal Programs also are given waivers for property taxes and sales tax on educational supplies. The following accrediting associations are approved for the Gold Seal Quality Care Program.

- **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC): 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460
- **National Early Childhood Program Accreditation** (NECPA): 800-505-9878
- **National Association of Family Child Care** (NAFCC): 515-282-8192
- **Association of Christian Schools International** (ACSI): 813-734-7096
- **Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment** (APPLE): 800-322-2603
- **National Accreditation Council for Early Childhood Professional Personnel and Programs** (NACECPPP): 703-941-4329
- **National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs** (NACECEP): 800-537-1118
- **National School-Age Care Alliance** (NSACA): 617-298-5012

For more information contact:

Paige Muse
Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Care Services
1317 Winewood Blvd., Bldg. 6, Room 381
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700
850-922-43810

Forms of Age-Related Stereotypes in Children's Literature

by Dr. Elizabeth Larkin

I have been reading intergenerational stories to young children, university students, and older adults for the past eight or nine years, asking them to comment on the images and relationships among characters in the different stories. My own preferences and dislikes are sometimes challenged by what I hear. I am forced to consider the meaning these images hold for different audiences.

My work in the field of intergenerational programming was the impetus for proposing the following criteria to critically examine images of aging in intergenerational literature for young children. At the Stride Rite Intergenerational Care Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts and at the Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center in Boston, I learned that the first activity early childhood teachers often suggest for older adult volunteers is to read a book with the children (Larkin & Newman, 1999). If we are going to promote closer ties among generations and dispel stereotypical ideas, we need to present literature that contains not only authentic age-related images, but also identify books that readers will enjoy sharing with their audiences. When older adults read stories to young children with characters who are also aging, they can invite discussion about growing older and the value of intergenerational relationships. Through these discussions, older adults can relate first-hand experiences that connect to the images portrayed in the literature. This can be an important learning opportunity.

Growing attention to multicultural education has raised teachers awareness of the need to include a range of images presented to children and to show all racial and ethnic groups or differently-abled people engaged in active, powerful roles (Derman-Sparks, 1989). At the same time, there is an exploding body of literature that includes inter-generational relationships. The time is ripe for reconsidering the issue of ageism in children's books.

The following guidelines for reviewing children's literature in terms of ageism were developed with help from a number of sources including The Council on Interracial Books' criteria for racism and sexism in children's books; reviews and commentary of the elderly in children's literature; as well as the observations of children and older adults enrolled in intergenerational programs; and student teachers in my courses, both at Wheelock College in Boston and at the University of South Florida in Sarasota.

"When children who have little contact with grandparents or other elders in their own lives are exposed only to stereotypical pictures and texts, they are apt to develop limited ideas about aging. Studies have shown that attitudes toward the elderly are evident as early as the preschool years."

Stereotyping

Attributing characteristics to elders in such a way that all older adults appear to have similar personalities, attitudes, and skills is a form of stereotyping. Some characteristics often portrayed in a stereotypical way include elders as cranky and demanding; inactive and dependent; in poor health and slow-moving; frequently forgetful; or conversely, all-knowing and infinitely wise. Traditional roles include sitting in a rocking chair; women baking cookies or knitting; dozing; walking with a cane; and wagging fingers at younger generations (Horner, 1982).

When children who have little contact with grandparents or other elders in their own lives are exposed only to stereotypical pictures and texts, they are apt to develop limited ideas about aging. Studies have shown that attitudes toward the eld-

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erly are evident as early as the preschool years (McGuire, 1993). The less young children know about the variation, complexity, and diversity that exist among the elderly population, the greater the likelihood they will develop fears about aging and older people. Children may not realize that the older we get, the more distinctive our personal histories become, making elders an extremely diverse group of people. While older generations of adults share common knowledge of social norms and important world events which occurred during their lives and can speak from personal experience about loss (both in terms of physical decline and in terms of relationships ending), they maintain unique identities as they continue through the life course.

Older adults have reacted strongly to negative images of their generation, and to images that, while positive, depict grandparents in staid, traditional male or female roles which do not reflect their lifestyles. For example, in Tomie de Paola's classic book *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* (1973), the women look very old, and the grandmother stands by a black stove in the kitchen wearing her apron. Is this image, probably derived from the author's memories of his own childhood, typical of another generation and therefore authentic, or is it a stereotype that suggests all grandmothers center their lives around the kitchen? Very young children are unlikely to grasp that the story is about another era and adults who are self-conscious about breaking away from antiquated notions of growing older may not appreciate this aspect of the book. Nevertheless, the overall tone of the story is captivating with its warm memories of a child's relationships with his grandmother and great-grandmother, and so is well worth reading.

"All too often, superficial and negative images are associated with aging."

Another book of de Paola's childhood memories is about his grandfather, *Tom* (1993). The book opens with his grandfather explaining, "We're named after each other, Tommy. That's why I want you to call me Tom instead of Grandpa." The pictures show a youthful looking grandfather with a cherubic smile and brown hair, although the top of his head is balding. This image is in stark contrast to Nana, still wearing her apron and gray hair in a bun in this story. This too is a delightful account of a warm and happy relationship between young Tommy and his grandparents, and the overall message overrides the stereotypical portrayal of his grandmother.

Reality

Often, in an attempt to compensate for negative images of aging, elders are portrayed as having extraordinary skills. For example, in the book, *Emma* (1980), by Wendy Kesselman, we see a seventy-two year old great-grandmother climbing trees to rescue her cat, Pumpkinseed. We are led to believe that she does this herself because she is alone and lonely. "But Emma didn't mind. She loved climbing trees." Later in the book, Emma is surrounded by friends and places she loves through discovering a new joy in painting. The image of overcoming loneliness toward the end of the life course is a positive one, as is the message of independence and growth. However, there is something disquieting about the lack of an intergenerational connection between this character and her family that might cause a younger audience to avoid the book.

While aging is not necessarily negative, and only about 5% of the elderly population resides in nursing homes, there are diminishing capacities, chronic illnesses, losses, and other difficulties associated with growing old that, if completely ignored, may perpetuate unrealistic ideas or expectations. Hiding unpleasant aspects of aging, or treating these issues only as painful problems to be overcome by brave role models, does not introduce children to a variety of experiences with growing older, nor does it give them ways to accept that the life cycle includes decline as well as birth and renewal.

Older adults need not be endowed with super-human powers to be successful. They can be portrayed more convincingly as continuing to grow and learn from experience throughout life. This is not to say that authors can't be playful with ideas about aging, or ever write about unusual older adults, but these characterizations must be sufficiently developed to make them unique and believable individuals.

One book that is especially successful and convincing in this regard is Eloise Greenfield's story, *Grandpa's Face* (1989). Although the story does have a kindly, reassuring grandfather who can solve a problem with a hug and a good talk, the relationships come across as authentic and the language is poetic, so that all ages of readers respond positively to the special intergenerational bond.

"If the topic of death comes up in a safe context with older adult role models, young children can be better prepared for this experience of life when they come to face it."

Another wonderful example of facing and resolving family difficulties is found in Sharon Bell Mathis' *The Hundred Penny Box* (1975). A young boy's hundred-year-old great-great-aunt keeps a box filled with a penny for each of her birthdays. When his mother wants to throw away the old box and replace it with a new one, the older woman says, "Anybody takes my hundred penny box, takes me." The boy loves to hear the stories she tells about each year of her life, and he intervenes to protect her possession. The characters in this story ring true, and the intergenerational bonds are rich and complex.

Another reality not portrayed accurately is when elders are depicted as living out of the context of history, culture, or family values, and are illustrated as charming cartoon-like characters. Of course, some books are written in a humorous style intended to entertain. However, all too often, superficial and negative images are associated with aging. Children are not critical consumers capable of differentiating between fantasy and realistic fiction when it comes to understanding the experiences of being old.

The older adults at the Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center, who listened to many intergenerational stories, tended to dislike stories about death, loss of memory, being moved into a nursing home, and other unpleasant experiences of aging unless there was some positive message that overshadowed the discomfort with difficult issues. Often I heard comments such as, "Children shouldn't know about that when they are very young" or "I wouldn't buy that book for a birthday present." In general, adults of all ages naturally prefer stories that they can relate to personally, and which reflect their own life experiences. It is as if too many stories about older adult characters have been about loss and suffering, rather than vigorous, meaningful participation in the world.

As life expectancy has continued to increase in the U.S., so too has every genre in children's literature begun to contain increasingly vital, engaged, and positive images of older adults. A particularly lovely story, for example, that was published in 1996 is *The Worry Stone* by Marianna Dengler with illustrations by Sibyl Graber Gerig. This book combines historical flashbacks of an older storyteller and a young boy's present reality to depict the wonder of understanding that bonds the two generations. The friendship grows across the vast age difference in a believable relationship that is highlighted by beautiful, detailed watercolors showing white hair, wrinkled faces, and worn hands in a way that generates a feeling of comfort and safety for the reader.

Language and illustrations

Children's literature does not always represent the dialogue of a child or an elder in age-appropriate language that accurately portrays speech in a way that is not demeaning. Elders who speak to young children in overly patronizing tones, or who converse about complex, abstract ideas with children who are at an age where they would not be able to understand such concepts, are examples of the misrepresentation of dialogue. Accompanying pictures also should reinforce positive notions about diversity and individuality across ages.

One book that has caused a great deal of animated discussion among students in my courses, as well as older adults at the Stride Rite Intergenerational Care Center, is *Wilfred Gordon MacDonald Partridge* (1985) by Mem Fox. The initial reaction is one of outrage at the pictures of elders who look fat, silly, and unkempt. In talking about the book, the older adults only grudgingly conceded that there is something positive about the relationships between the child and the residents of the home, focusing instead on the images in the pictures that are perceived as insulting. The story is about the older adults' attempts to explain memory loss (Alzheimer's disease) to a youngster, using metaphors that were criticized as vague or confusing.

In contrast, elders at the Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center really enjoyed *How Old Is Old?* (1987) by Ann Combs, which deals with an abstract concept. This book succeeds by making analogies that children can understand from their limited experience. The book is a

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Left to right back row: *Suzi Jamrog, Suzanne Gellens, Donna Shreve, Mona Jackson, and Beverly Oglesby.* **Front row**: *Cynthia Poudrette, Amy Cordray, Janice Sean, Marguerite Orban, and Blanche Turner.* **Not in picture**: *Sister Roberta Bailey and Debra Coney.*

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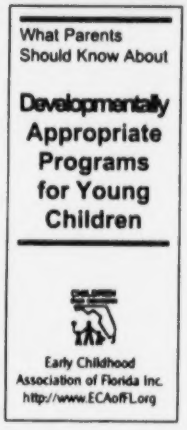
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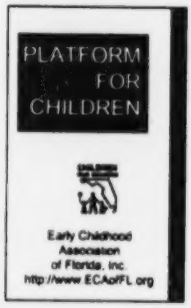

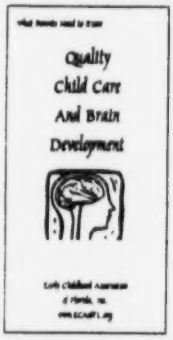

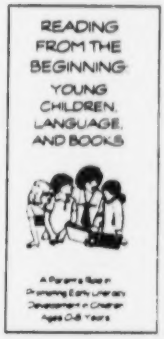

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poem about the relative nature of a lifespan and what it means to be old. As one woman remarked, "The ideas of this book can grow with the child, and the child can grow with the book."

Another book that was not well received is Norma Farber's *How Does It Feel To Be Old?* (1979). The underlying tone of this book was perceived as angry, and the negative feelings about what it is like to grow old in our culture was disturbing. After reading this book, there may be fear of the experience of aging with its connotations of loneliness and loss. The text is reinforced by somber, brown pen and ink drawings.

How does it feel to be old?
Quite brave, quite bold!
I say what I choose –
Having nothing to lose
By being a demon, taking a chance.
No punishment.
I can afford
To be mean, cranky and mean,
Ranting and raving.
I've nothing to get –
No kiss, no reward –
For proper behaving.
I come, I go,
As though – as though
Nobody cared if I came or went.

From *How Does It Feel to be Old? (1979)* by Norma Farber

The mood of a book can be distinctly telegraphed by illustrations, as it is in *Chicken Sunday* (1992) or *The Keeping Quilt* (1998) by Patricia Polacco where the artwork and use of color create a cheerful, upbeat tone. It is the pictures created by Paul Galdone more than the text in *Grandmother and I* (1961) that reinforce the rocking chair stereotype.

"Some books containing stereotypical notions about young and old people are still worth reading, but they need to be followed by discussion so that potential misconceptions can be addressed."

In *Grandma Gets Grumpy* (1988) by Anna Grossnickle Hines, both the text and the pictures belie the myth implied by the title that the older we get, the grumpier we get.

Sentimentality

There is a fine line between a truly touching story about the relationship between a child and a grandparent and an attempt to manipulate emotions through overly sentimental stories about the young and the old. We are all vulnerable to some degree when it comes to warm, loving memories of childhood and families. But these tender, human moments must be treated with respect and not be simplistic or glib. Judgments about what constitutes improper sentimentality must be left to individual readers, but this dimension has been abused frequently in children's stories about grandparents or elder family members, neighbors, and friends.

The Whales' Song (1990) by Dyan Sheldon might be considered sentimental in its lovely, airy artwork and imagination about hearing the whales sing, but it manages to evoke, instead, a dreamlike fantasy inspired by a storytelling grandmother. With few words and beautiful illustrations, this book is highly recommended by every generation. Another favorite among all generations is *Love You Forever* (1987) by Robert Munsch, illustrated by Sheila McGraw, about a parent's love across the life course.

Some older adults have shown disinterest in books that are about ethnic or religious groups different from their own because they are not able to relate to the characters' roles, values, and experiences. Although most teachers and children enjoy and appreciate *Annie and the Old One* (1971) by Miska Miles, a story about a Navajo grandmother's impending death and her granddaughter's attempts to forestall the event, older readers at the Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center found the book too long and sentimental in its treatment of death. While they might acknowledge the educational importance of such a book, they would not choose to read it of their own accord. Some of their avoidance also may have been due to a reluctance to discuss the issue of death with young children, particularly through a different cultural lens. However, if the topic of death comes up in a safe context with older adult role models, young children can be better prepared for this experience of life when they come to face it. Having such a conversation with an older adult, based on a story they have just read together, would be an opportune time to transfer shared cultural beliefs and practices. This is one contribution that older adults can make to a child care program that is unique and valuable.

Recommendations for a positive intergenerational experience

Reading intergenerational stories with children and elders, and asking them to discuss the images of each age group, is a way of checking what ideas are being reinforced and which details might be distorting children's ideas of other generations. Readers will want to be aware that using a different tone of voice can alter the meaning of the text, so they should select books they enjoy and that present images with which they are comfortable. Some books containing stereotypical notions about young and old people are still worth reading, but they need to be followed by discussion so that potential misconceptions can be addressed. A good story and an enjoyable relationship shared by different generations can be a positive step toward dispelling unwelcome stereotypes about aging.

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Special Note to All Members:

As you know, we now have a lobbyist in Tallahassee. She is doing a great job representing us and helping get the things done that are in the interests of children and the early care and education community. To have this extra person available for ECA of FL, we are asking our members to donate to the Public Policy Advocacy Fund. Make a gift in honor of or memory of a friend, a relative, or a special teacher. Mail your tax deductible donation to the ECA of FL office.

New Florida Rules Take Effect

- **Specialized Child Care Facilities for the Care of Mildly-Ill Children (Chapter 65C-25).**
- **Family Day Care Standards and Large Family Child Care Homes (Chapter 65C-20).** This includes the new 30-clock-hour Family Child Care Training course, First Aid, CPR, and the rules and staffing for large family child care homes.

For information call 850-488-4900.

Child Care Center Directors Increase Knowledge, Skills, and Networking Through the Florida Administrator Credential

by Dr. Leighan Rinker

"I mostly liked sharing with other directors and learning that I was not the only one with staff problems."

Most child care center directors in Florida know they must obtain a credential as part of the minimum child care licensing standards by January 1, 2003. But do they know the purpose of credentialing, what obtaining a credential entails, and its unexpected benefits?

The purpose of requiring a child care and education program administrator credential of Florida center directors is multi-faceted. It is intended to

- increase the knowledge and skill level of administrators;
- improve the quality of centers;
- create career advancement opportunities; and
- "professionalize" the child care and education field and make it a viable career choice

To better understand the credentialing process and its unexpected benefits, it is helpful to look at the pilot program developed in Palm Beach County and implemented in August 1999. Last fall, twenty-seven child care center directors and two family child care providers completed a fifteen-week, forty-five hour Foundational Level course through Florida Atlantic University entitled Foundations of Child Care and Education Program Administration. This group met once a week for three hours a night to listen, discuss, share, role play, problem solve, and learn about issues that are critical to our jobs as directors. Guest lecturers presented material and led discussions on leadership, management, personnel issues, financial issues, child care and the law, marketing, observation and assessment, health, safety, nutrition, family involvement and communication, developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum and environments, mentoring, and ethics. The students took the theory learned in the classroom and put it into practice on the job and in written assignments. They developed resource portfolios which they continue to use at work.

Many directors were not sure if an administrator credential course would be beneficial to them because they had already been in the child care field for ten, twenty, even thirty years. They discovered that the information they learned and the skills they developed were practical, useful, and extremely helpful as they carried out their daily job responsibilities. Some unexpected benefits of the course were:

- Directors developed friendships and a strong professional network which they continue to use six months after completion of coursework;
- Directors formed a mentor program to assist other directors;
- Each student developed a portfolio including all topics covered in class. This portfolio serves as a desktop resource for the center directors; and
- Directors learned new ideas which when implemented, improved the quality of their programs.

Dr. Leighan Rinker has been an early childhood educator for over 20 years as preschool teacher, child care center owner and director, college professor, and national presenter. Leighan served on the State of Florida Task Force to develop criteria for the Administrator Credential. She wrote and taught the first credential course in the state.

Pat McCree, a student in the foundational level class and center director for three years said, "The Child Care Administrator course was a wonderful enrichment learning experience for me. The course gave me many resources to pick out the areas that I need help or information on. It also helped me to gain more confidence in my administrative abilities." Other student comments were:

- "I've started already making changes to company policies and making sure what I say is legal."
- "I plan to use my portfolio for training, and as a resource for others whose goals are to become a director or to open their center."
- "The information and ideas that were shared provided new ideas and changed some things that needed to be improved. I could not have developed these resources on my own."
- "I mostly liked sharing with other directors and learning that I was not the only one with staff problems."
- "The whole experience was wonderful – I am so happy to have been able to participate."

"This was the most enjoyable course I've ever taught," said Leighan Rinker, course instructor, college professor, and child care center director. "It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the students as they shared experiences, problem-solved together, and recounted success stories about applying new information and strategies in their centers. Six months after class we are still getting together."

The Florida Child Care and Education Program Administrator Credential consists of two levels: the Foundational Level, which is one approved college level course that may be taken for 4.5 continuing education units or three college credit hours and the Advanced Level, which consists of three approved three-hour college level courses. Both levels include competency-based coursework in one or more of the following curriculum areas:

- Overview of Child Care Center Management
- Child Care and Education Organizational Leadership and Management
- Child Care and Education Financial and Legal Issues
- Child Care and Education Programming

For information on course offerings or to receive a credential application, call Felicia Bonner, Florida Children's Forum, 877-358-3224 (toll free).

There are several educational exceptions to the educational component for the Advanced Level Credential. A competency-based test is also available for those who meet the requirements for the educational exception, but do not have the required coursework in early childhood education or administration.

Scholarship support is available for those who qualify through T.E.A.C.H. For scholarship information call: 1-877-FL-TEACH.

For 6,000 Florida child care center administrators, obtaining their credential is a way of saying to our state and to the country, "We are professionals; we are life-long learners; we strive to provide the best education and care possible for the children and families of Florida!"

CREDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- **A high school diploma or GED (including the Spanish GED)**
- **The Department of Children and Families Part I Introductory Child Care Course (the original 20-hour Introductory Child Care Course with the new requirement of 10 hours in observation and assessment)**
- **The 10-hour module *Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Children with Special Needs* or an approved equivalency**
- **A CDA, CDA equivalency, a formal education exemption (including a waiver) or an employment history recognition exemption**
- **One to three approved courses in early child care and education program administration (in some cases exceptions will be granted for persons with degrees and specified coursework)**
- **One or two years of experience in on-site child care and education program administration.**

Institutions offering courses for the Administrative Credential.

Foundation Level

At this time the following institutions have coursework available that has been approved:

Brevard Community College
Broward Community College
Chipola Junior College
Daytona Beach Com. College
Edison Community College
First Coast Technical Institute
Flagler Vocational Tech. Center
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Com. College at Jacksonville
Gainesville College
Gulf Coast Community College
Lake Technical Center
Lee County High Tech Center
Lindsey Hopkins Tech. Educ. Ctr.
Manatee Community College
Manatee Technical Institute
Marchman Educ. and Tech. Ctr.
Miami-Dade Community College
Nova Southeastern University
Okaloosa Walton Com. College
Palm Beach Atlantic College
Pensacola Junior College
Pinellas Technical Center
Polk Community College
Robert Morgan Vo-Tech
Sante Fe Community College
Sarasota County Technical Institute
St. Petersburg Community College
Tallahassee Community College

The following educational institutions have submitted coursework for approval or letters of intent to offer the coursework for the Foundational Level of the Administrator Credential by the spring of 2001:

Atlantic Technical Center
Central Florida Community College
Hillsborough Adult Technical Center
Hillsborough Community College
Indian River Community College
Lake City Community College
Learey Technical Center
Locklin Technical Center
Orlando Tech
Palm Beach Community College
South Florida Community College
St. Johns River Community College
Valencia Community College
Withlacoochee Tech. Institute

Advanced Level

At this time the following institutions have coursework available that has been approved:

St. Petersburg Junior College
Palm Beach Atlantic College

The following institutions have submitted coursework for approval or letter of intent to offer the coursework for the advanced level of the Administrator Credential by the spring of 2001:

Brevard Community College
Broward Community College
Central Florida Community College
Daytona Beach Com. College
Florida Community College
Florida Gulf Coast University
Gainesville College
Gulf Coast Community College
Indian River Community College
Lake City Community College
Manatee Community College
Miami-Dade Community College
Nova Southeastern University
Palm Beach Atlantic College
Pensacola Junior College
Polk Community College
Santa Fe Community College
Seminole Community College

For more information contact Regina Please, 850-921-4713 or 850-547-3641.

Video Lending Library

NEW TITLES ADDED:

#73 The Child's Brain Matters - Video presents a clear description of how the brain functions, and the importance of early stimulation on the development of young children.

#74 Soy Tu Hijo (I am Your Child - Spanish)

#75 I am Your Child: Quality Child Care: Making The Right Choice for You and Your Child. Hosted by Maria Shriver. This video includes information on:

- Why quality child care is important for your child's healthy development.
- What you should look for when choosing child care.
- Questions to ask a potential caregiver.
- Questions to ask yourself when looking at a child care setting.
- Important information to communicate to your caregiver.

#76 I am Your Child: Discipline-Teaching Limits with Love. Hosted by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton. Included in this video is information on:

- Why a child actually looks for limits.
- Techniques for setting effective limits from the start.
- Why a firm but gentle approach is the most effective.
- Managing your own emotions and avoiding physical punishment.
- Why the limits children learn in their first few years build a foundation for the rest of their lives.

#77 Confronting the Crises - concerns child care in America. Produced by "Lifetime: Television for Women and Caring for Kids" The video discusses the status of child care, and the effect of the quality child care crises on families, especially mothers.

#78 Born To Read- Florida Style - See how public libraries and communities work together to ensure that all children are truly Born to Read!

Call the ECA of FL office for a brochure: 941-951-0606

The ECA of FL Video Lending Library is a free benefit for members.

Hearing A Child's Call for Help: Creating Safe Classrooms

by Dr. Becky Bailey

"Teachers play a significant role in how children perceive each other and view misbehavior."

Ron was a difficult student. He would enter the classroom full steam ahead each morning. Most mornings that meant knocking over a child or two on the way. He was aggressive some days, withdrawn others. His lack of social skills irritated all the other children. No matter what the teacher seemed to do, he was sooner or later excluded by others. The teacher would talk to the other children and explain that Ron needs friends. This pep talk lasted about an hour until Ron, once again, found himself removed from the group due to his inability to control his body, anger, and impulsiveness. No matter what discipline strategies the teacher used, Ron was sure to be its recipient.

Common sense and current brain research indicate that children who feel picked on, left out, and threatened in school generally do not function optimally. They more than likely exhibit behavior problems. They are also the least likely to change those behaviors. This is because the frontal lobes of their brain that deal with "perceptual mapping" and complex behavior are unable to be engaged. Blood flow and electrical activity in the brain is diverted from the frontal lobes into the brain stem. The brain shifts into a survival mode (Niehoff, 1999). With survival as the main goal, the child becomes less capable of receiving information and problem solving, and more defensive and helpless when faced with school demands. The brain functions optimally when stress is low and security, challenge, and stimulation are high. Any system of learning that relies on controlling others through rules, punishments, and rewards will be harmful to all children in the long run, and especially damaging to children called "low achievers."

Activities that are challenging and exciting to one learner may be threatening to another. Children can and must be used as valuable resources to one another. Children can offer others comfort, support, ideas, feedback, and encouragement. Brain research states that the most important things needed for optimal brain functioning are safety, security, feedback, and encouragement (Jensen, 1997). Children must be taught how to seek help from each other, offer help to each other, and create an atmosphere of trust, caring, and mutual respect. The most creative thinking occurs when learners are not threatened and feel safe with their peers. To feel safe with one's peers children need to perceive other children in the best possible light. If the children perceive a child as a "bad boy" or "bad girl," the opportunity to build an inclusive, caring classroom becomes impossible.

Most everyone has experienced a Ron in their classroom. To create a safe classroom we need to hear and respond to Ron's call for help in a way that does not label him as "bad" for the other children. This requires we step back and become aware of our patterns of interaction with children. This awareness is especially critical when children misbehave. When children misbehave in our classrooms we have a choice. We can see the situation as "bad" and attempt to find the "bad guy" with the goal of getting them to feel bad in order to behave better. Or we can see the misbehavior as a call for help with the goal of giving the child the help he or she needs to be successful in the classroom.

The "Call for Help" Perceptual Frame

Teachers play a significant role in how children perceive each other and view misbehavior. We have a choice. We can teach children to see others who act inappropriately as bad and deserving rejection, or we can teach children that these behaviors are a call for help.

At any given moment, children feel safe and are extending love to others through helpful behaviors, or they feel threatened and are calling for help by acting in hurtful ways to themselves or others.

The perceptual framing of a "call for help" is taught by the teacher's response to misbehavior. The following are examples of teachers who either respond to a child's call for help, or respond by unconsciously labeling the child as bad.

Dr. Becky Bailey is a nationally recognized educational consultant in the field of elementary and early childhood education. Her experience includes 25 years as a university professor and teaching at every level of education from infants to adults.

Jeb is sitting at a table with four other children. They are independently working on journal writing. Jeb is not focused on his writing and instead is talking and fidgeting.

Recommended for Situation 1
"Call for help"—
A two-step teaching process

Step 1: Empower the students to respond to Jeb. The teacher, noticing the disruption, walks over to the table. She speaks first to the children who seem distraught with Jeb's behavior by saying, "Is Jeb's talking and fidgeting bothering you?" If the response is "Yes," the teacher then teaches the students how to assertively communicate with Jeb. She might say, "Tell Jeb, 'I can't focus my work when you are talking. Please be quiet!' "

Step 2: Using a "call for help" perceptual frame. The teacher then turns to Jeb. She might say, "Jeb it seems you are having a problem focusing on your journal work. What could you do to help yourself stay focused?" The teacher could also elicit assistance from the children at the table by saying, "Jeb seems to be having a problem staying focused on his journal writing. What could we do to help him?"

Not Recommended
for Situation 1
"Labeling the child bad"—
A one-step process

Step 1: Deliver the prescribed consequence to Jeb. The teacher noticing the disruption walks over to the table. She speaks firmly and directly to Jeb. She might say, "Jeb, what should you be doing? Focus on your journal writing. You are bothering the other students at your table who are trying to work. Go put your name on the board."

Situation 2

Eileen enters the classroom with a grumpy look on her face. Her body language is tense. She bumps into several friends, knocking them out of the way. The friends scream for the teacher.

Recommended for Situation 2
"Call for help"—
A two-step teaching process

Step 1: Empower the students to respond to Eileen. The teacher responds to the situation by going to the children who were bumped and saying, "Eileen walked by you and bumped into your arm. It seems like it really hurt." The girls shake their head in agreement. The teacher continues, "Did you like it?" "No," responds Cara. "Then tell Eileen, 'Watch where you are going. It hurt when you bumped me.' "

Step 2: Using a "Call for Help" perceptual frame

The teacher then turns to Eileen and says, "Eileen you seem grumpy and tense this morning. Something frustrating seems to be bothering you. What could you do that would help you feel better?" The teacher could also elicit assistance from the children in the classroom by saying, "Eileen seems to have had some frustrations getting to school this morning. What could we do to help her feel better?"

Not Recommended
for Situation 2
"Labeling the child bad" —
A one-step process

Step 1: Deliver the prescribed consequence to Eileen. The teacher hears the cries of the children and goes directly to Eileen. She looks at her disapprovingly and says, "Eileen, it is not nice to push your friends. You must pay attention to where you are going. You hurt your friends. How would you feel if they bumped into you like that? Go take a pink slip from the box. If you lose two more slips you will not have recess today."

The choice is clearly in the hands of the teacher as to how to teach children how to perceive misbehavior. We can teach children that people who act differently than us deserve punishment and condemnation or we can teach children that variations in behavior have reasons and deserve careful reflection and direction.

During the past decades, public schools have been inundated with social and emotional programs for children. Many schools have adopted information-oriented, single-issue programs. Programs such as Character Education, Values Development, Multicultural Education, Conflict Resolution, Peer Mediation, Violence Prevention, Social Skills Training, and Drug Education are utilized. Sadly, many of these programs are implemented in current school climates of individualism and competition, as well as in school-wide discipline systems based on control and compliance. Teachers reprimand and punish disruptive students for infractions of rules, yet teach conflict resolution or "build character" in class meetings. In other words, the programs can end up promoting the "do what I say, not what I do" syndrome so prevalent in our

conflicted world. We can do it differently. How we perceive and respond to conflict is under our direct control. When we start making changes in ourselves, all the children, especially the Rons' in the world benefit.

This article is excerpted from *Conscious Discipline: 7 Basic Skills for Brain Smart Classroom Management* by Dr. Becky A. Bailey. Reprinted with permission from Loving Guidance, Inc. 1-800-842-2846.

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The Nominating Committee is looking for **CURRENTLY ACTIVE ECA OF FLORIDA AFFILIATE MEMBERS** who are willing to be nominated to serve on the Board of Directors in one of these positions:

•President-Elect
•Financial Officer
•Vice President for Public Policy
•Vice President for Organizational Development
•Central Regional Representative
•Southeast Regional Representative

Please contact your local affiliate president or the ECA of Florida Office for an application.

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In memory of Phyliss Tucker's father
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Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children contributed $500 to support ECA of Florida's Public Policy Advocacy efforts and bought a Brain Bag to donate to the Orange County Public Policy.

Project DIRECT at the University of Toledo is looking for early childhood teachers who work with itinerant teachers for a national survey. Contact Dr. Lyn Hale 1-877-417-1791.

Thanks to the following businesses for their donations to the ECA of FL Conference

Kaplan Companies, Inc.
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Responsible Me, Inc.
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Sterling Book Connection
The Learning Connection
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The Letter People - Abrams & Co Publishing
The Pin Man
The Wright Group
Time For Kids
Tupperware Fund Raising Activities
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Prize Winners: Darlene Clubb, Barbara Backus, Clara Harrington, Bea Pimpinella
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The Gambia Connection

"It takes a whole village to raise a child."

– African Proverb

by Rhudine M. Poole

Rhudine Poole, an early childhood advocate and officer with the Hillsborough Early Childhood Association, is making a unique connection in The Gambia, West Africa. Rhudine, along with Dr. Mary Lindsey of the Hillsborough County Center of Excellence, and four others, traveled to The Gambia in July 1999 to assess the educational needs of young preschool-aged children.

The fact-finding mission unveiled a critical need for school supplies for the children, teacher resource materials for their facilitators, and teacher training. Most of the classroom environments were bare of visual or hands-on stimuli and were overcrowded with as many as 40 to 90 children per one or two teachers or facilitators.

Upon their return, Rhudine and Mary got busy soliciting donations of children's books, crayons, pencils, notebook paper, drawing paper, glue, scissors, and art supplies. Money was collected for wells and shipping costs. Thanks to caring people around the state of Florida and other regions, the first shipment of materials arrived in The Gambia just before Mother's Day. In addition, Dr. Lindsey traveled back to The Gambia in March to present checks totaling $2,400 to cover the cost of digging two wells in remote villages. She also coordinated the renovation of a two-room building donated by the people of The Gambia through the Christian Children's Fund. This building will house the newly named *Center of Excellence Resource Center* where teacher training and hands-on activities with small groups of children will be provided.

Rhudine will be returning to The Gambia on November 19, 2000 for a 6-7 month stay. As a volunteer, she will be involved in assessing and planning with directors of six villages, assisting teachers in their classrooms, working to train facilitators in culturally and developmentally appropriate early childhood practices, and facilitating correspondence between the U.S. and The Gambia.

Rhudine is asking ECA of Florida and its affiliates to get involved in making a difference in The Gambia by adopting a classroom, establishing pen-pal correspondence between our children and theirs, or simply sending school supplies and manipulatives to help stock the resource center.

How to send supplies for "The Gambia Connection"

NOTE: Materials may be mailed by parcel post or larger quantities may be shipped by freighter. It takes close to three months for shipments to arrive in The Gambia. In either case, the word **"GIFTS"** must be written on the outside of the boxes so that the recipient will not be levied with taxes, handling charges, and overhead costs.

Mr. Ousman Cham, Director, Christian Children's Fund will need a copy of the bill of lading and a list of contents within the boxes if shipped by boat so as to get a duty waiver through the governmental procedures. A mailing service can handle most of the requirements. Fax a bill of lading to Mr. Cham at FAX #370624, Country Code 220. E-mail Mr. Cham at ccfgambia@gamtel.gm that a shipment is en route so he will begin to look for its arrival.

In your E-mail, mention Rhudine Poole or Dr. Mary Lindsey. Send all materials to:

"Gifts" Christian Children's Fund
18 Kairaba Avenue P.M.B. 2
Banjul, The Gambia, West Africa "Gifts"

For more information please contact:
Rhudine M. Poole, University of South Florida, MHI 2210B,
13301 N. Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33612.
E-mail address: sojourner1949@hotmail.com
Phone: (813) 974-2082 , Fax (813) 974-6115

Everyone Included!

A Look at Natural Environments

by Bettianne S. Ford

When it comes to providing quality early learning settings for young children with special needs, there are many questions related to how well the children can integrate into programming that is tailored for children who are typically developing. Is there a formula for making it work? Are there some programs that may work better than others? Are all programs equally effective? Great questions all. First, let's explore the subject from the perspective of children who are typically developing. Do all of the children with typical development need the same type of program? Are all equally as active or social? Are they all at the same developmental level? Great questions, again, which lead us to realize that just as children who are typically developing have individual early educational needs, so do children who may have special needs which include physical limitations or developmental delays. First, we need to broaden our thinking to focus on the growth and development of all children as the primary factor, instead of limiting our focus to special needs and delays.

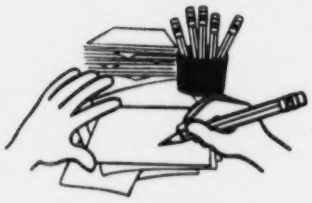
So, we ask, how do we determine the best way to encourage the growth and development of children with special needs in an early learning setting with typically developing peers? Are our daily plans and activities enough? The first step in the process is to consider the supports in place to promote the placement of young children who have been identified as having special needs into settings with their typically developing peers. Let's take a look at some federal legislation that helps us. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) was enacted to ensure appropriate learning opportunities for children with special needs. For children birth to three who are eligible under Part C of the legislation, there is a requirement that the services they receive be in ***Natural Environments***. While there are varying interpretations of the term Natural Environment, the overall intent is that each child needs to be considered individually by the team of people working together with the family to determine which learning environments are best for promoting the positive outcomes identified for the child on the child's Family Support Plan.

The following quotes are excerpted from the Position Paper on the Provision of Early Intervention in Accordance with Federal Requirements on Natural Environments, developed through the *IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinator Association* in April, 2000.

- Providing services in a natural environment is not just the law, but more importantly, it reflects the core mission of early intervention, which is to support families to provide learning opportunities for their child within the activities, the routines, and the events of everyday life.
- Early intervention services support or enhance the child's participation in daily activities and in the routines of their family in community settings where a child lives, learns, and plays.
- "Natural groups" of children are groups that would continue to exist with or without children with disabilities. Groups that are not "natural groups" include playgroups, toddler groups, or child care settings that include **only** children with disabilities. However, even the most "natural" of groups is not a natural setting for a particular child if it is not part of that child's family routine or community.
- Inservice and preservice activities include curriculum and objectives to build awareness and understanding of how to identify learning opportunities and to provide early intervention services within the daily activities and routines of children and families in which learning naturally occurs.

How do we interpret all of this? If a family has selected your child care setting, you need to identify how the daily programming you provide meets the individual learning needs for the child with special needs, just as you are already doing for those who are typically developing. You also can take advantage of the Special Instruction Consultation provision of the Florida Part C Program for children who are eligible. It provides funding for a specialized individual who can come into the child care center on a limited basis for the purpose of assisting in the planning and identification of learning opportunities and programming to promote the outcomes desired for the child. If you need to know how to contact the Early Intervention Program in your area, call the Central Directory of Children's Services at 1-800-654-4440.

Bettianne S. Ford,
Early Childhood Consultant,
Gainesville, FL



A letter to ECA of FL

A child care, early childhood education issue that is of great importance to children and their families is the Pre-K Early Intervention Program financed by the state of Florida. The purpose of this program has been to provide kindergarten readiness opportunities to children who are economically disadvantaged or who have special challenges. The curriculum dictated is one that is developmentally appropriate to best meet the needs of each individual child.

The question to discuss is in what setting children aged forty-eight to fifty-nine months can best be served. It is my contention that children this young do not belong on regular school campuses when there are high quality alternatives readily available. The professionally trained teacher in the well-equipped child care setting is, in my opinion, the best environment to nurture and guide the four year old student. As an owner of such a preschool program, it was my pleasure to provide such an environment for the Pre-K community for the past seven years. We employed educated instructors with a B.A. in early childhood and/or CDA degrees. The children received before and after school care in one setting without having to be transported to several sites in a day. I now own a child care center in a community where the Pre-K program is on public school grounds and I transport the young children to and from school in the mornings and afternoons with the other school-aged students. The little ones are often overwhelmed at the responsibilities thrust upon them; keeping up with belongings, moving from place to place, and having so many caregivers in one day. They must be assimilated into our preschool class before and again after attending their Pre-K day. This does not include the changes experienced from vacation and summer schedules.

It is appropriate that school boards want to provide the very best early childhood education possible and ensure taxpayer's "money's worth" for contracted programs. I am certain that they received this in the individual child care settings that were implementing the highest standards set. In this particular business, providers are dedicated to children and families and indeed usually provide care for them for many years. This provides consistency and continuity in young lives that directly affects self-esteem.

Almost daily, the newspapers in Central Florida report the overcrowded conditions that plague our schools. We cannot build quickly enough to accommodate the high rate of growth. There is also much recent publicity surrounding the "grading" of schools, with many receiving unacceptable scores. Why then, do we place even more children into this scenario for purposes of getting them ready for school? Is there a danger of "burn-out" for our students who will have been on an elementary campus for seven years?

An extremely important component of the Pre-K program is that of fostering parent involvement, be it with field trips, direct classroom interaction, or fund raising projects. The close daily contact that the child care centers have with parents is the superior avenue to accomplish this goal. We build a close rapport with parents which gives us great opportunities for joint problem solving and increasing parenting skills. The child care centers become full-service schools as we help find transportation, a dentist, an attorney, get an electric bill paid, or simply supply active listening. The school-based setting is really not conducive to this degree of interaction.

I very strongly think that school boards need to examine the option of using the experience and talent of professionals in the early learning centers to deliver the all important Pre-K programs. Families and young children will benefit from these partnerships.

Kathryn Lavender, Owner
Loving Care Child Care Center
Apopka, FL

Do you have a burning issue you'd like to bring to our members' attention?
Send letters to the ECA of FL office
3049 Browning Street / Sarasota, FL 34237
Phone: 941-951-0606; Fax: 941-952-0116; E-mail: ecaoffl@earthlink.net

INFANT INSIGHTS

Infant Visual Stimulation

by Pamela Hansen

Observe the ceiling by lying on the floor for five minutes. Do this in several areas of the room. What is the lighting like? Is it too bright? Is the ceiling high or low? What is there to see? Infants spend many hours a day looking up at the ceiling, yet often it is the one part of the room that we neglect to use. We usually put up posters, hang mobiles only in cribs, worry about the floor covering, choose toys carefully, and forget the ceiling. A roll of fishing line, some hooks, and inexpensive materials can easily turn a dull ceiling into a visually stimulating learning environment. This is especially important since critical pathways for vision develop in the brain during the first year of life.

Drop ceilings (white panels with metal squares) can be utilized by tying one end of fishing line around the metal frames. If you do this, make sure that no children are below you and that you are careful with your eyes, since occasionally little bits of white board flake off. Also, flammable materials should be placed far away from lights so they do not get hot.

Solid ceilings can be painted (with soothing colors or patterns) and rounded screw hooks can be used to attach the fishing line. Many things can be hung from the ceiling. Be careful not to make the environment overstimulating. It is good to have a theme running throughout the ceiling to tie everything together to create a cozy environment.

At the Family Resource Center at Florida Gulf Coast University, our infant room includes many of the following materials that are visually stimulating and appropriate for infants and young toddlers.

VISUALLY STIMULATING MATERIALS FOR INFANTS

Postcards and photographs: Realistic postcards that are shaped like flowers, butterflies, and animals are a great resource for many areas in the classroom. Laminated and hung, they make wonderful mobiles. Photographs from the front of cards or from calendars work just as well.

Poster board cutouts: Simple circles, cut from white poster board, can easily be made into black and white visual stimulation cards by drawing faces or patterns on them with black markers. Butterfly shapes can be covered with bright felt or decorated with markers. Star cutouts can be covered with tin foil or shiny fabric. For a quick and easy mobile, shapes can be cut from colored poster board.

Bean bag and other light toys: Bean bag baby toys that are shaped like birds are wonderful for hanging from the ceiling. A large needle can be used to thread fishing line through the bean bag. Other light toys that are visually interesting, like squoshies or small stuffed animals, also can be hung.

Fabric: Sheets of fabric can be suspended from the ceiling four or more feet above the cribs or play area. This can help block the lights and create a more secure environment. The sheets should not be near lights where they will get hot. A light blue sheet can be the background for hanging stars, clouds, birds, etc. Fishing line and PVC piping (thin, light plastic tubes that can be found at any building supply store) make it easy to hang material from the ceiling. Fabric hung from the ceiling can also be used as a part of a multicultural curriculum. Traditional African or Indian fabrics can be used to create a visually interesting areas to capture and sustain infants' attention.

Paint: If the ceiling is solid, it can be painted pale blue with white clouds. When painting a ceiling, remember that it is a good idea to keep the colors light and not too visually stimulating. A painted ceiling should serve only as a subtle backdrop for the objects that are closer to the infants.

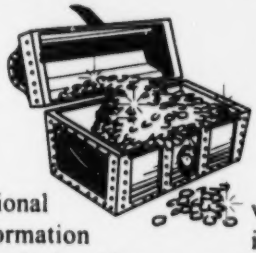
Mobiles: Donated or purchased mobiles are great to hang over the young infant area. The best mobiles are the ones that have the objects facing down toward the infant instead of out toward the caregiver. A mobile should be hung two to three feet off of the floor. A paper clip tied with the fishing line can be added higher up so that the mobile can be raised when mobile infants (especially those who can walk) are in the area. A young infant area can be made by dividing the room or by using a play yard where mobiles can hang very low.

ECA of FL has a brochure on infants & toddlers. See page 14 to order.

Pamela Hansen, Head Infant Teacher, Family Resource Center, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida, may be called at 800-590-FGCU or 941-590-7857 for additional information or questions about infants and young toddlers.

Affiliate Treasure Chest

South Florida AYC Week of the Young Child Activities



To celebrate the Week of the Young Child, the South Florida Association for Young Children (SFAYC) and Miami-Dade County Public Schools co-hosted their first annual Early Childhood Conference on April 14, in Miami. More than 500 early childhood teachers and child care professionals attended this free, one-day conference.

Participants listened to stimulating presentations by nationally known presenters. Mr. Maurice R. Sykes, Director of Early Childhood Programs, District of Columbia Public Schools and currently serving on the National Association for the Education of Young Children Governing Board and Dr. Charles Washington, Professor of Public Administration, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Florida Atlantic University, spoke to the theme "Teachers are the Key."

These accomplished keynote speakers were only part of this great day. Breakout sessions were provided offering demonstrations and innovative ideas to make learning come alive. Thirty-three presenters demonstrated exciting lessons in literacy, movement, art, health, science, math, and physical education. In addition, local and national vendors offered information and displays of new curriculum ideas and products.

Celebrations continued all over town. Mrs. Betty Key, President of SFAYC, spoke to students enrolled in early childhood classes at Florida International University; Pre-K teachers at North County Elementary asked parents to "Spend a Book Day with Your Child;" University Children's Center took a field trip to the local library to hear stories read by South Miami Mayor, Julio Robina; Barry University hosted an Early Childhood Conference; and It's a Small World Learning Center sponsored a "Hop-A-Thon" during this week benefitting the Muscular Dystrophy Association to name just a few of the many activities that marked this special week.

SFAYC is proud to have been able to help recognize the wonders and the needs of young children through events undertaken during the Week of the Young Child. Members are excited about next year's events.

by Dr. Cathy Powers, WLRN
Coordinator of Community Education

Left to right: Maurice Sykes, Lucia Vicencio, Betty Key, Nereida Santa-Cruz, Dr. Sylvia LaVilla, Noemi Rameriz

Southwest FL

The fourth annual Child Care of Southwest Florida's "Circles of Care" Conference was held on Saturday, May 6, in Fort Myers. Over one thousand people attended this event. ECA of FL, Lee AEYC, Charlotte AEYC, and Collier Co. AEYC worked together with a membership table in the exhibit area. Together they greeted people, gave them literature on ECA, their local affiliate, and copies of *Young Children*. Several people from LaBelle (Hendry Co.) discussed forming an affiliate. ECA of FL and its affiliates had a strong presence thanks to Miriam Silver (Collier), Janice Sean (ECA of FL), Suzi Jamrog (Charlotte and ECA of FL), Kate Sroka and Karen Serrell (Lee).

Central

North and South Pinellas have merged under the new name Pinellas Early Childhood Association and are working together successfully. The Lake AEYC affiliate had a conference on August 19th in Eustis, FL. Dr. Wally Baine, the keynote speaker, discussed, "Why Early Childhood?" The Orange County Commission Chairman presented the Orange County AEYC a proclamation making April 9-15th the Week of the Young Child. The affiliate presented four "Children's Champion of 2000" awards at the County Commission meeting. Patricia Tye, Nurse Practictioner, and Marie Barnett, Karla Ingrassia, and JoAnn Sanderlin, owners of child care centers who have been active in the field for 20 years, were honored for their work in helping raise the quality of child care in the tri-county area.

Did You Know ?

by Suzi Jamrog

Too often children are exposed to a new food, and before trying the child exclaims, "I don't like that!" If this repeatedly happens the child is labeled a "picky eater." Many children do not have repeated opportunities to eat new foods because the caring adult decides this initial rejection is a fixed and permanent dislike of the food.

When we think of eating we tend to think simply of taste. The acceptance of food is more complex and includes the use of many senses. This includes texture components such as creamy, crunchy, greasy. For children over three, smell contributes to flavor. The appearance, of course, affects acceptance. Children tend to more readily try foods that are familiar or similar to the foods they have previously eaten.

A goal in a program for young children should be to foster the development of healthy eating patterns. Our food likes and dislikes are influenced by learning. This gives us a wonderful opportunity through the snacks and meals we serve to contribute to our children's food acceptance.

To do this, it is necessary to be persistent in offering new food choices. But offering is only the beginning. Acceptance will only occur when children taste the food. The taste does not have to be a portion. Children in our center have a choice when the foods are passed. They can try a big bite or a "mini" bite. This allows the children to feel safe to accept and successfully meet the challenge you have presented to them. If the child tries and rejects the food, they have met the challenge and can move on.

Food acceptance is slow. It often requires ten experiences before change in acceptance is achieved. This holds true for toddlers and adults. I know this personally because the most recent addition to the list of foods I have "learned" to like is catfish, but I'm still considering guacamole.

I love offering children new foods and seeing them increase their personal food palate. After a child has been with us for a short time we do not hear, " I don't like that." But after they have tried it we may hear, "I tried it and I don't care for it." That is valid and a wonderful, safe risk for a child.

Suzi Jamrog is Southwest Regional Representative for ECA of FL and the Director of Pumpkin Patch Preschool, Port Charlotte, Florida.

✂ Cut and paste onto an index card. - - -

The Book Nook

Children's Literature in Review

by Dolores Burghard

Oh My Baby, Little One

By Kathi Appelt; Jane Dyer, Illustrator; ages 2 – 3; Harcourt, Inc.; 27 pages

Separation is a huge issue with parents and toddlers. This story opens with Mama Bird getting ready to start the day by taking Baby Bird to school. All along the way she reassures him of her love. She tells him her love will be with him all through the day, while he is clapping, singing, looking at a book, playing in the sandbox, painting, at story time, and nap time. She also tells him that this love will be with him throughout her workday, and that the best time will be when she picks him up at the end of the day.

The basic steps for facilitating separation are contained in this book. Mama Bird includes reassurance of her ever-present love, review of the activities the Baby Bird will be involved in while she is absent from him, where she will be, and what she will be doing while he is away from her. She states her happy good-bye and most importantly her promise to return for him at the end of the day. The illustrations are large and colorful, making the book easy to view. The text definitely helps the young child to relate to the feelings of separation and may draw comfort in knowing *Mommy will come back*!

How Night Came to Be

A Story from Brazil; Re-told by Janet Palazzo-Croiy; Filipe Davalos, Illustrator; ages 6 – 8; First Legend Series, Troll Communications LLC

Children can begin to develop an understanding of legends, which are often called myths. These are stories that people long ago created to explain things in their world that they did not know about or understand.

This story relates how night and day came to be. It portrays love of a parent and the love between two people of different worlds. This love and the desire to see to another person's needs bring about the balance of night and day. An important lesson is put forth in the good that can come when we consider the needs of others.

The illustrations are bright and colorful. The text is simple and in large print and appropriate for beginning readers.

See How I Grow

A photographic record of a baby's first 18 months. By Angela Wilkes; ages 1 – 6; DK Publishing, Inc.; 32 pages

Children are fascinated with babies. The realization that they were so little at one time is also very thrilling. This book is a delightful collection of photographs of a baby girl's stages of growth from 4 weeks through 18 months. The different stages of development are depicted in chronological sequence from the first smile to being able to ride a trike. It also relates how other members of the family interact with the baby at each level and how they help her develop new skills.

Toddlers will be able to relate with their own progression toward independence and are enchanted with the fact that they have shed their "baby" image. Older siblings will identify with the events of having been involved in the development of a younger sibling. This book can be helpful to older siblings who are about to experience the addition of a new baby.

The pictures are clear and captivating and so reflective of the wonderful miracle of growth.

Saturday Market

By Patricia Grossman and Enrique O. Sanchez; ages 4 – 8; Lathrop, Lee and Shepard Books, a Division of William Morrow & Co.Inc.; 29 pages

Travel to Mexico and visit a lively market place. The story's narrative is informative rather than plot based. It tells how Mexican people prepare for their journey to the market to sell their goods. Each page deals with a person or group of people and the product they are marketing. The Spanish name and use of each product is interwoven in the text. It reflects some of the hardships experienced by the people in getting their products to market. A young boy, Luis, hopes no one will buy his pet pig. Rosa's leather supply arrived late, making it difficult for her to get her *huaraches* made on time. Paco bought a silent rooster that caused him to be delayed in his routine because it failed to crow in the early morning. There is a

Dolores Burghard, is the Director of Creative School for Children, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

feeling of warmth and calmness among the Mexican people even though they encounter worries in marketing their goods.

The Spanish terms are placed almost like a rebus story so that children can guess at the meaning easily. There is a glossary of Spanish words provided in the back of the book. This provides a great opportunity for children to learn some Spanish.

The illustrations were originally done in acrylic paints on canvas and give a soft, artistic, warm feeling, portraying the people and the market as a friendly and happy place.

📖 **"STAND BACK," SAID THE ELEPHANT, "I'M GOING TO SNEEZE!"**
By Patricia Thomas; Wallace Tripp, Illustrator; ages 4 – 6; Lothrap, Lee & Shepard Books; Division of William Morrow & Co., Inc. 29 pages

This is truly a fun book written in nonsense rhyming verse. An elephant feels a sneeze coming on and warns all the creatures in his surrounding environment. They all know that a sneeze from an elephant could cause a loss of feathers, wings, hairs off the bear, stripes off a zebra, spots off the leopard, and on and on. (Can you hear the giggles?) Then, surprisingly, a little mouse scares the elephant and stops the sneeze. All is well. Right? Wrong! The elephant finds this not only astounding, but really funny. He goes into great laughter that sends him into thunderous rolling on the ground to the point, you guessed it, all that the creatures feared from the sneeze began to happen as a result. Children like to role-play this funny ending. You will end up with a class of rolling elephants!

📖 **WILLIAM'S DOLL**
By Charlotte Zolotoz; William Pene DuBois, Illustrator; ages 4 – 6; Harper Trophy, A Division of Harper Collins Publishers; 32 pages

This is an old book that may be overlooked amidst all the bright new books on the market. It carries such an important message about a boy named William, who wants a doll to love, cuddle, and care for. Of course, his older brother's friends call him "creep" and "sissy." His father wants to rescue William, so he buys him a basketball and hoop. William practices a lot and becomes quite skilled at putting the ball through the net – but he still wants a doll. His father continues to try to distract William's interest in a doll by purchasing a train for him with tracks, tunnels, and bridges. William plays long hours with his new toys, but still wants a doll.

His grandmother comes for a visit and William proudly shows her his skill in throwing the basketball through the net and his wonderful train set up. While taking a walk with his grandmother, he tells her how much he wants a doll. He tells how his brother and friend call him "creep" and "sissy." And his dad keeps buying him other toys. Grandmother understands William's desire for a doll and, like all good grandmothers, buys him a doll.

William is delighted but father is upset and can't understand William's desire for a doll. Of course, Grandmother explains William's need to learn to be loving and nurturing is to enable him to become a wonderful dad like his father.

This is a real tool in helping fathers who have difficulty with their sons' interest in dolls and so called "girl things."

ECA OF FLORIDA OPPORTUNITIES

Scholarships and Grants

- Annual Conference Scholarship
- Educational Scholarships
- CDA Scholarships
- Membership Action Plans for Affiliate Chapters
- Membership Start-Up Grants
- Emergency and Disaster Relief Grants

CHILDREN OUR CONCERN

Call ECA of Florida office for applications: 941-951-0606

In Memoriam

Betty Butler

Betty Butler was a dedicated child care advocate who was a volunteer in ECA of FL for many years. Betty came from Indiana to Florida in 1958. She was a mother and grandmother. She was a Kindergarten and 1st grade teacher for 42 years. Betty served twenty years as a Board member and committee chairperson of Big Sun Association for the Education of Young Children. She was president in 1990 and 1997. She represented Big Sun on the Child Care Conference Committee since the first conference in 1988. Currently she was president of the Marion County Reitred Educators Association. Betty was active in the Early Childhood Association of Florida and served on the Advisory Board for many years. She served on the Advisory Board for many years. Betty served on many committees and was Chair of the Publications Committee and Nominating Committees.

Betty was a mentor to incoming teachers, giving speeches and workshops to encourage them. She will be missed by many people. The Ocala Public library is having a statue commissioned in Betty's memory. It will depict a woman in a rocking chair reading books to three children. Donations can be made to Friend of the Public Library: Betty Butler Memorial. 15 SE Osceola Ave. Ocala, FL 34471.

Cecilia Helton

Cecilia was an early childhood advocate, supporter, and mentor for many high school and adult students. She enjoyed her work enormously and was always willing to contribute. She was instrumental in the continued growth and development of many child care programs in Hillsborough County and the state of Florida throughout her 30 years of service with public schools. During Cecilia's career she served in the capacity of a classroom teacher, department head in Family and Consumer Sciences, coordinator of Child Care Apprenticeship of Hillsborough County, and also chaired and served on numerous school and community committees.

Career Accomplishments and Honors

- Curriculum writer for State, District, and County courses
- Early Childhood Education
- Child Development
- Child Birth Preparation
- Child Care Apprenticeship
- Robinson High School Teacher of the Year, Hillsborough County, 1992-93
- Hillsborough County Vocational Teacher of the Year, 1993-94
- Officer, Florida Association of Child Care Apprenticeship Programs (FACCAP)

– by Vera Davenport

In Memoriam

Nancy Duran Thomas

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Nancy Duran Thomas.

A lifelong educator, Nancy was known and loved by many early childhood professionals and advocates around the state. Nancy received a B.A. from Earlham College in Indiana and a Masters of Education from Rutgers University. She began her professional career as a preschool teacher. In 1973, she moved to Florida where she was the Executive Director for the Ridge Area Association for Retarded Citizens and then, curriculum consultant and district coordinator for exceptional student education in Highlands County. In 1979, she became a consultant for preschool programs for children with disabilities for the Department of Education. She was named director of the Office of Early Intervention in 1986. During her tenure in that capacity, Nancy's leadership guided the implementation of Florida's Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program and the inception of planning for the Part C Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Nancy was steadfast in her commitment to high quality programs for young children. She was an individual of great personal integrity, with strong convictions and principles. Nancy exuded a grace and elegance that was admired by all. Her caring and compassion were straight from her heart. Her example inspires us all to strive for no less. She leaves behind many friends and colleagues for whom she served as a mentor and guide. Her memory will live on in our continued commitment to children and families.

[Note: Plans are underway to establish a scholarship fund in Nancy's memory. For more information, please contact Cathy Bishop at 850/488-1216 or Dr. Carole Fox Abbott at 305/274-3501]

– by Cathy Bishop

Pat Wilson

Pat Wilson was the first president of the Collier County AEYC. When the need for leadership arose, Pat came forward with enthusiasm and energy. She had a commitment to bringing a high level of professionalism to all working with young children. Pat worked efficiently to write by-laws, a mission statement, and goals. She gathered a Board of Directors and identified the needs of the new organization. She presided at their first meeting with plans, ideas, excitement, and exuberance. Pat left an indelible impression on all who worked with her. The continuous growth of the affiliate will be a tribute to her memory.

Pat was the director of the East Naples United Methodist Church Learning Center. She was active in the ministry program at her church and their mission in the Dominican Republic Orphanages.

– by Dr. Miriam Silver

Ruth Ethel Clewell

Ruth was an advocate for children most of her life. She spent tireless hours working to improve the quality and education of young children during their early years. She was a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, The Early Childhood Association of Florida, and the North Florida Association for the Education of Young Children. Ruth was also a consultant for the First Coast Providers Association and an active voice for children with many community programs and agencies. Ruth will truly be missed.

Donations in memory of someone or in honor of a family member or colleague can to made to the Grants and Scholarship Fund or the Public Policy Advocacy Efforts of ECA of Florida.

Excerpts from the ECA of FL book:

Activities That Build the Young Child's Brain

Ordering information on next page

Outdoor Enrichment Activities

- **Camping** - Erect a tent in one area of the outdoor play area. Establish a rotational system that gives 15 minutes of play to a small group of children. A large appliance box can be used as a camper.
- **Car Wash** - Use sponges, soapy water and scrub brushes to clean wagons and tricycles. If possible, once a year bring a real car into the area and let the children thrill to the process of washing a car.
- **Bubble Mania** - Place a variety of bubble blowing wands of various sizes throughout the play area. Use fly swatters, cans with both ends removed and sanded smooth, six pack plastic holders and large bent hanger wands with the bubble mixture placed in shallow pans.
- **Decorate the play area** - Weave crepe paper into the fence. Wrap play equipment with thick yarn and crepe paper. Use water color paint to decorate play apparatus. Take pictures and write a story.
- **Target Practice** - Hang paper plates from trees with yarn. Give children squirt bottles filled with colored water and let them aim at the plates, watching them twirl as they are hit.

Creative Movement

Moving creatively to either music or music coupled with words not only helps children understand the tempo of music and the beat of speech, but stimulates several parts of the brain at the same time. Children learn to move in sequence to the words or the music. It is fun as well as helps children act in conjunction with other children.

- Use tapes and records that give specific directions of movements described by the words of the song. Al Rasso, Hap Palmer and Ella Jenkins songs have easy-to-follow movement activities.
- Define varied tempos with ribbons, exercise streamers and scarves.
- Clap, wave and twirl paper plates to the beat of music or move the plates with others to teach cooperative skills as well as tempo.
- March to different rhythms.
- Move a bed sheet to music as a group. Parachute play uses large arm muscles as well as requires cooperation. Walk to the right or left as a team; hold it high or low. Shake the parachute to create waves. Try rolling a ball into the middle and from side to side while sitting or standing.

Puppets

Developing activities around puppets provides children with a unique acting situation. Often children do not know how to use puppets. They have to be taught how to use them correctly. A puppet theater is not necessary and can create difficulties when children are just beginning to use puppets. Let them stand behind a chair at first. Later simple theaters can be made out of large boxes.

- Develop a puppet tape that can be placed in a listening area with several children. Each child holds a puppet and moves to directions on the tape that teach the child to manipulate the puppet to eat, sit, dance, twirl, bend, cry, laugh and sleep. Once children learn how to use a puppet they can then use them for acting.
- Read a story as the children manipulate the puppets. *Chicken Little*, *Gingerbread Boy* and *Three Little Pigs* are easy for children to act out. After they know the story well, props such as small plates and plastic foods can be added.
- Sing a familiar song or fingerplay as children create the story with puppet characters. "The People on the Bus," "Put Your Finger In the Air" and "She'll be Coming Around the Mountain" are fun using puppets.
- Write down children's own puppet stories using dictation.
- Make puppets using a variety of materials. Be sure the task is appropriate for the age level and skills of the children. It can only be their product if the child makes it, not the adult. Spoons, paper plates, paper bags and towel holders create fun puppets.

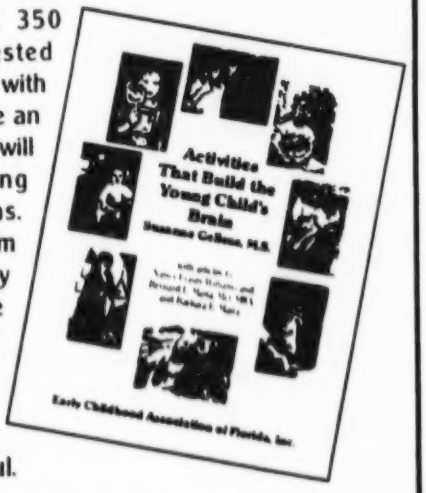
Purchase ECA of FL's unique Brain Packet and Activity Book

Included in the packet are items explaining the newest research on the child's brain, how the brain develops, and the type of environment needed to reach optimal growth to be ready for school. The multimedia packet will be useful for parents and families or anyone caring for young children. Materials are provided for caregivers to share this information with the parents of the children in their care.

The bag contains 3 videos, 6 books, 2 pamphlets, a brain box, and 20 each of ECA of FL's brochures. (Also available in Spanish)

$100 + $10 shipping & handling.

This book has 350 classroom tested activities to use with children to create an environment that will stimulate young children's brains. Families, classroom teachers, family child care home providers or anyone who spends time with children will find these ideas useful.

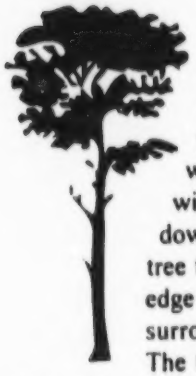


$10 + $3 shipping & handling.

To order Brain Packet or Activity Book:
Phone: 941-951-0606 • Fax: 941-952-0116 • Email: ecaoffl@earthlink.net
ECA of Fl Business Office: 3049 Browning St., Sarasota, FL 34237

Barking Up The After-School Tree

by Janet Davies



One afternoon in our after-school program, we were fortunate to witness the cutting down of a huge pine tree that stood on the edge of the trees that surround the school. The thick bark of the pine tree seemed to jump off the trunk as it plummeted to the ground, shaking the school yard from the soccer field to the swings, with its loud thump. The event inspired an art project that emerged from the words and direction of the children, spurred on by the materials.

"Did you see that?" someone yelled. After it was all over we were able to examine the bark, only to discover you could pull it off easily. We began pulling it off in pieces. "Can we keep these?" numerous children asked. "Sure," I said, "but why don't we do something with them first?" "Like what?" one of the children asked. "Can we paint them?" asked another. "Okay, let's paint them and then we can figure out what to do next," I replied.

We gathered left-over paint from my "Fours" room, where I spend most of my day, when I'm not working in after-school care, and some more paint from the kindergarten room. I added a bit of white paint to all of the colors to mute and clean up the bright ones, and to perk up the dull ones. The resulting palette of paint was a pastel menagerie of color.

The painting project took place outside, on the playground, on the picnic tables under the shade of some trees. Initially there were about five children at the tables painting but soon a small crowd began to gather. Children from first to fifth grade joined in. Children were examining the bark pieces as they pulled them off the tree. They noticed worm lines and beetle bores on both sides of the bark along with other patterns nature had created and left behind.

The concentric lines and circles on the pine logs encouraged paint patterns that followed the contours of the wood. Some of the pieces were painted in only one or two colors while others were mosaics of color. All of the bark pieces were little masterpieces with the lines of dark brown wood between each carefully painted, layered contour.

The next day when their work was dry, I offered them beads, sequins, gold-painted acorns, and numerous containers of small tissues, papers, baubles of every sort that I had collected previously. The older group of children created designs and patterns with the various materials and glue. Some followed the contours of the bark as they glued on beads, while others created their own patterns. There was some discussion about "what" they were making – a name plate, a paper weight – but few children seemed to care what it was they were making; the care was in the creating.

I offered bark pieces to younger after-school children the day after the older group had first started the project. They used a similar palette of paint, with the younger group soon searching for pine cones, rocks and even acorns to paint.

After the younger group's work dried, we fashioned them into mobiles by stringing them on nylon fishing wire, securing a wooden bead above and below each bark piece, securing them in place. Nearly every piece of bark had a "natural" hole bore through it by some creature from nature, so we only had to drill a few holes. Their mobiles were hung from various points around the school courtyard for all to enjoy.

Only maturity of dexterity and manipulation of the materials separated the two groups resulting work. Where the older group had wanted to decorate their bark and keep it as individual work, the younger group wanted to hang theirs collectively as part of a group piece. The bark made a lovely transformation from forest floor to treasured art piece, and from possible mulch to pleasing mobile. A small project that required few resources took a few days to complete but offered a richness in experience and shared beauty for all.

Janet Davies, ECA of FL's Vice President for Professional Development, is a Montessori-trained preschool teacher implementing a Reggio Emilia inspired Fours program at Brentwood School in Gainesville, FL. She is a published art critic and writer. She was nominated for Disney's American Teaching Award.

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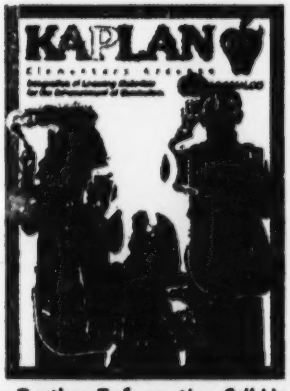

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